

POSSIBILITY OF GRANTS

Fox Theater Named National Landmark

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WASHINGTON — The Fox Theater has been designated a national historical landmark, the Interior department revealed Wednesday.

The designation does not guarantee that the theater will be preserved forever, but it does provide official recognition of the Fox's unique qualities and provide some protection against damage to the old building.

A spokesman for the department said that once a building is named an historic landmark, any federally funded project that would affect the building is required to file an environmental statement showing the impact the project would have on the landmark.

Naming a building an historic landmark adds the structure to a list "of buildings and other man-made objects considered to be so outstanding that they should be recognized," the spokesman said. The designation's protective power is "mostly a matter of moral persuasion," he added.

A spokesman for Fifth District U.S. Rep. Andrew Young, who along with Georgia's two senators was notified of Interior's decision Wednesday, said

that the designation also makes the owners of the building eligible to apply for federal grants to help pay the costs of preserving it.

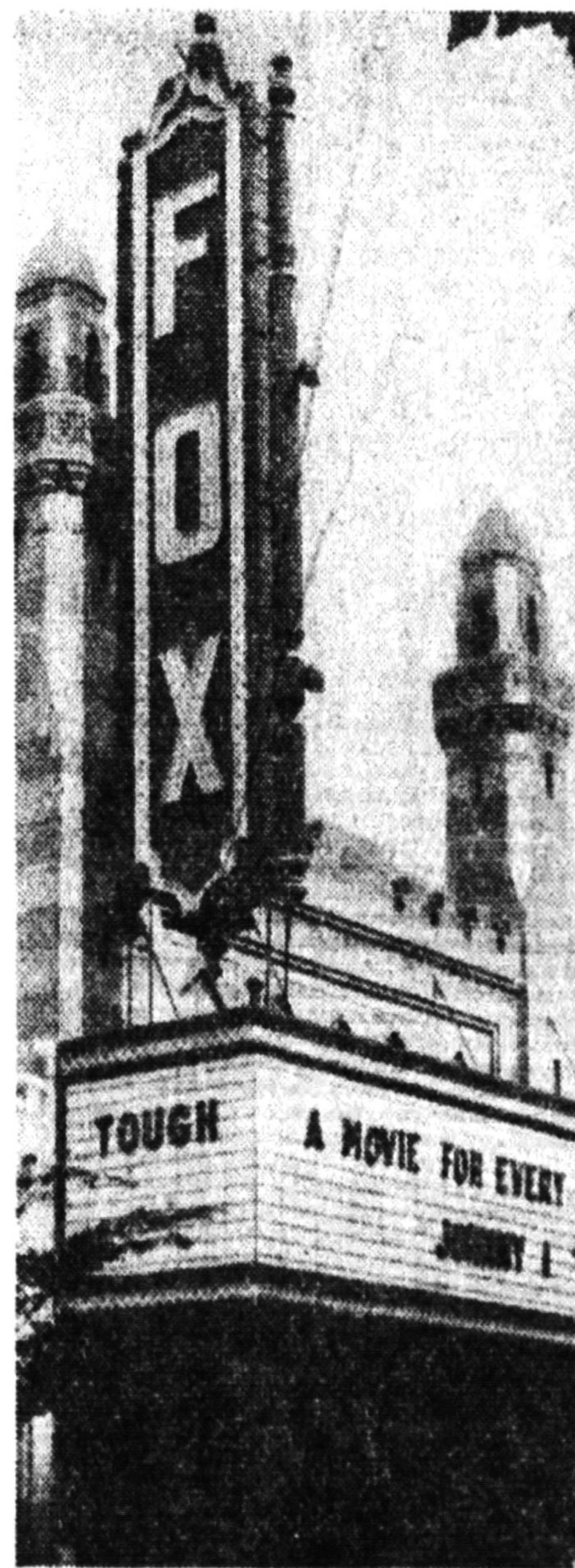
The Fox was threatened with destruction two years ago, when its owners planned to tear the theater down and sell the land on which it sits to Southern Bell for an office building.

After much public uproar, a group called Atlanta Landmarks Inc. was formed to preserve the Fox, and managed to save it by assembling an equivalent-sized parcel land next to the theater and swapping the land to Southern Bell for the Fox plot.

A spokesman for the telephone company said Wednesday that Atlanta Landmarks Inc. is now the sole owner of the Fox property. "As good citizens, we are glad to hear of the designation and we wish them well," the spokesman said.

Officials of Atlanta Landmarks could not be reached for comment.

The Fox was submitted to the Interior department for consideration by the state Office of Historic Preservation. The Atlanta theater was one of a number of sites suggested by the state as potential historic landmarks.



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